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The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities: Assessing Language Education Policies under the EU's Open Method of Coordination

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to highlight a change in the European Union's 'Lisbon Strategy' since its launch seven years ago, in terms of putting more emphasis on culture as an important aspect of social inclusion. The article focuses on a research project coordinated in 2006 by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), which reviewed and assessed cultural policies aimed at the social inclusion of ethnic minorities introduced in the National Action Plans (NAPs) on Social Inclusion of five new member states of the European Union: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Sweden was additionally included in the study with the initial idea of serving as a benchmark in terms of best practices for promoting the inclusion into mainstream society of 'persons born outside Sweden' in its educational and cultural policies. The article will focus on language education policies that have been introduced in the six NAPs. Although it is still too early to draw conclusions on the impact of such policies on the social inclusion of ethnic minorities or on the creation of equal opportunities for all, a clear tendency can be made out within the EU to emphasize more the importance of considering culture when creating an environment that encourages the social inclusion of minority groups. Section I of this article will give a short outline of the motivation behind conducting research on the link between cultural aspects and the social inclusion of ethnic minorities within the OMC framework. Section II further elaborates on the importance of education—and language education policies in particular—for the promotion of the social integration of linguistic (ethnic) minorities in multiethnic societies and the creation of the grounds for their equal access to the labour market. Section III provides an overview of how effectively the six EU member states under evaluation have promoted ethnic inclusion through the education and language policies adopted in their NAPs from 2004–2006. At the same time, it will demonstrate the difficulties that the researchers encountered in collecting data and thus establishing reliable results. This problematic will be taken up again in the concluding Section V, where recommendations are presented as to how the countries under evaluation as well as other EU member states and those on the verge of accession can effectively promote sustainable social inclusion of ethnic minorities with cultural policies and how effectively the OMC can potentially contribute to this aim.

I. Why Consider Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities?

Considering culture as an important aspect of social exclusion of ethnic minorities is relatively new to the member states of the European Union. The 'Lisbon Strategy', launched seven years ago with the aim of making the EU the most competitive economy

in the world and achieving full employment by 2010, rests on environmental, social and economic pillars, designed to modernize the European social model by investing in human resources and combating social exclusion. A list of targets was established in order to achieve the goals set in Lisbon, according to which the member states are expected to invest in education and training, and to conduct an active policy for employment. The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) was introduced as a means of governance that uses soft law mechanisms, such as guidelines, indicators, benchmarking and the sharing of best practices, and which relies on the voluntary cooperation of its member states, entailing the development of National Action Plans.

The 'Laeken Indicators', a set of comparable primary and secondary indicators for social exclusion that were established by the Social Protection Committee and presented to the European Commission in 2001, focused primarily on income inequalities, access to and participation in the labour market, and health, and only marginally on education, not mentioning cultural aspects as indicators for exclusion. Although the new set of common indicators, established in 2006 as a result of the re-launching of the Lisbon Strategy and the streamlining of the OMC process, placed more emphasis on educational attainment, culture again does not play a role as an indicator. Hence, the motivation behind the study on 'The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities' was the fact that the significance of culture in promoting the social inclusion of ethnic minorities and creating equal economic opportunities has not yet been fully recognized in the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion adopted by the EU member states under the OMC. Some member states have included cultural policies in their NAPs but, however, fail to mention how these will enhance the social inclusion and participation in the labour market of ethnic minorities. For this reason, the European Commission has recently drawn attention to the importance of culture in promoting the inclusion of ethnic minorities and immigrants and has identified culture as a key policy area to be assessed and evaluated,[1] arguing that access to cultural activity is a core part of human existence and is thus crucial for fostering a positive sense of identity. In its report of March 2004, the Commission emphasized cultural policies as a central part of any approach to

[1] European Commission, "Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion, 2002–2006: Evaluation of the Impact of Inclusion Policies under the Open Method of Coordination", Call for Proposals, VP/2005/009.

addressing social exclusion and highlighted the aspect of culture in promoting social inclusion in countries with high immigration.[2] Since then, some research funded by the European Commission has focused on participation in cultural activities, cultural identity, and regeneration of excluded communities,[3] and the next report by the Commission included an evaluation of policies on better access to culture in the NAPs on Social Inclusion 2004–2006.[4] It also discussed for the first time the inclusion of ethnic minorities but, at the same time, revealed that no link had yet been established between the two issues in any of the NAPs. Hence, the report presented four main areas of interest related to culture: access to culture, problems of culture in remote areas, creative activity and cultural activities to promote the social inclusion of ethnic minorities.

To advance the research in establishing an intrinsic link between cultural aspects and the social inclusion of ethnic minorities, ECMI coordinated a study to assess cultural policies in the NAPs of five EU25 member states and one EU15 member state. The selection of Estonia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Sweden was based on the value that each of these NAPs afforded to culture or the necessity to implement cultural policies. Four of them had highlighted the issue of Roma/Sinti exclusion from the socio-economic sphere. Sweden was included, as its Agenda for Culture 2006 promised synergy with the NAPs on Social Inclusion and was expected to serve as a good practice example. The NAPs evaluated pertain to 2004–2006. While three domains of social exclusion were selected by the research teams for study—education, media and public participation—this article focuses on the language (and) education policies introduced in the NAPs of the six EU member states and their impact on the social inclusion of ethnic minorities in multicultural societies.

[2] European Commission, "Joint Report on Social Inclusion, Summarizing the Results of the Examination of the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (2003–2005)", COM(2003)773 final of 12 December 2003, at http://www.europa.nl/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/com_2003_773_jir_en.pdf.
[3] Roberta Woods *et al.*, "Report of a Thematic Study Using Transnational Comparisons to Analyse and Identify Cultural Policies and Programmes that Contribute to Preventing and Reducing Poverty and Social Exclusion", Centre for Public Policy, Northumbria University, 2004.
[4] European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document, "Implementation and Update Reports on 2003-2005 NAPs/Inclusion and Update Reports on 2004-2006 NAPs/Inclusion", COM(2006)62 final of 23.03.2006.

II. Language Education, Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

If we look at equal opportunities as an approach to providing a social environment in which people are not excluded from the basic activities of society, such as education and employment, the focus on cultural aspects to promote social inclusion and as necessary conditions for the creation of such an environment seems justified.

The choice of education as one main area for research on policies aimed at social inclusion and as a factor that in the long term helps to create equal opportunities was therefore obvious, as education covers different and complementary functions in minority integration: it prepares the individual for life in mainstream society; it has, in general, a positive impact on the self-esteem of members of ethnic minorities; it fosters intercultural understanding between minority and majority populations; and it helps to reinforce that culture and literacy are intrinsically connected. Education is also closely related to other spheres of social life, such as employment and access to the labour market.[5]

Language is an essential part of ethnic identification and serves as a vehicle for transporting and transmitting cultural traditions. Education can thus function as a means of keeping alive minority groups' traditions and languages. In modern nation states, culture is usually passed on through education; in that respect, language education policies that promote dialogue between minority and majority are an essential contribution to the social inclusion of ethnic minorities in ethnically heterogeneous states. Sociological and sociolinguistic studies have in recent years provided evidence and now take it, along with UNESCO, as axiomatic that children learn best in their own language.[6] At the same time, they have revealed problems that arise at school and are language related (e.g., when the teachers' language differs from that of the pupils). UNESCO admits that "it is not always possible to use the mother tongue in school and, even when possible, some factors may impede or condition its use".[7] Language issues are widely seen as one of the major causes of the greater rate of school failures and of the higher number of school dropouts among minority children. School is a major socializing

[5] Tove Malloy and Michele Gazzola, "Final Report on 'The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities'", Report undertaken for the European Commission by ECMI, 2007, 17, at http://www.ecmi-eu.org/no_cache/home/news/single-news-item/article/35/164/.
[6] UNESCO, *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education* (UNESCO, Paris, 1953), 11.
[7] *Ibid*.

institution of society and, as such, it exerts some power over its pupils. Children of minority groups who do not have the same cultural and linguistic background as the majority pupils are likely to encounter problems and conflict.[8] Education is thus a key element in the collective combat of social exclusion and is necessary to improve knowledge, which again translates into better job opportunities but also into a better understanding of society's explicit and implicit features and rules. Recent studies in different multiethnic societies in which there is one dominant language and one minority language have shown that those members of society that speak both the dominant language and the minority language have had the best job opportunities, followed by those only speaking the dominant language, while those only speaking the minority language have had problems in accessing the job market.[9]

Education also plays an indispensable role in the construction of individual and community self-esteem and representations. In light of this, it is difficult to clearly identify, specify and isolate the channels through which education fosters social inclusion. However, social scientists have means of interpreting educational phenomena as well as analytical and empirical tools to support theoretical insights and advise policy makers at their disposition, such as cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA). By focusing on partial analyses, useful insights can be provided and used as input for general discussion.[10]

Language and education are both central to the formation and maintenance of the modern nation states, as education and the language(s) legitimated in and through education play a key role in establishing and maintaining the cultural and linguistic shape of the nation state. There are various underlying factors that motivate the introduction of language policies at a national level in regard to the education of national minorities, ranging from state control and the aim of assimilation to respect for human rights.[11] At the same time, European nations with heterogeneous ethnic compositions and/or high immigration flows are increasingly coming to understand the importance of integrating their ethnic minority

[8] See, for example, Suzanne Romaine, *Language in Society. An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000), 205–206.

[9] See, for example, Britta Korth, "The Limits of Language Revival", 2001, at http://www.cimera.org/files/biling/en/Korth_Languagerevival.pdf

[10] Malloy and Gazzola, "Final Report on 'The Aspect of Culture ...", 55.

[11] Compare Christina Bratt Paulston and Kai Heidemann, "The Education of Linguistic Minorities", in Thomas Ricento (ed.), *Language Policy. Theory and Method* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2006), 292–310, at 298.

communities into the social life of mainstream society as a factor that guarantees political stability, as the social exclusion of members of ethnic minorities carries the potential danger of escalating ethnic violence. On the other hand, cultural diversity and plurality of ideas should be seen as an important source of social innovation,[12] thus enriching the cultural life of society as a whole. Policies and regulations for promoting cultural diversity are central to the formation and maintenance of modern nation states. Education and the language(s) legitimated in and through education play a key role in establishing and maintaining the cultural and linguistic shape of the nation state. However, policies regarding the language education of minorities, like any language policies, can only be successful in the long run if the whole socio-cultural context of the society concerned is positively inclined towards the promotion of cultural (and linguistic) diversity.

III. Language Education Policies under the OMC in Six EU Member States

The six country reports[13] that resulted from the evaluation study and the report by Tove H. Malloy and Michele Gazzola to the European Commission[14] served as the basis for this comparison of six National Action Plans. The structure used in this chapter allows for the grouping made in the initial phase of the research, when it was decided that the teams on the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Sweden would concentrate on social inclusion policies addressing Roma minorities and, in the case of Sweden and Slovenia, policies on immigrants. The research teams from Estonia and Latvia would form a second group that would study policies of inclusion addressing the Russian-speaking populations of these two member states.

[12] Milada Horáková and Pavel Bareš, "Final Report Czech Republic", ECMI Working Paper No. 29, October 2006, 8.
[13] *Ibid*.; Antoinette Hetzler, Marcus Persson and Elin Lundin, "Final Report Sweden", ECMI Working Paper No. 34, October 2006; Aksel Kirch, Tarmo Tuisk and Mait Talts, "Final Report Estonia", ECMI Working Paper No. 30, October 2006; Michal Vasecka, Magdaléna Sadovská and Barbora Vašečková, "Final Report Slovakia", ECMI Working Paper No. 32, October 2006; Mitja Žagar, Miran Komac, Mojca Medvešek and Romana Bešter, "Final Report Slovenia", ECMI Working Paper No. 33, October 2006; and Brigitta Žepa, Ilze Lāce, Evija Kļave and Inese Šūpule, "Final Report Latvia", ECMI Working Paper No. 31, October 2006. All of the above papers are available for download at http://www.ecmi.de/rubrik/58/working+papers/.
[14] Malloy and Gazzola, "Final Report on 'The Aspect of Culture …"

A. NAP Policies in Regard to the Education of Roma and Immigrants in the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Sweden

1. Slovenia

(a) Promotion of Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Minorities in Slovenia's National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2004–2006)

The Slovene NAP on Social Inclusion 2004–2006 lists, in order of importance, the key challenges that the Slovene government faces in the promotion of social inclusion and creating equal opportunities:

— Further developing an inclusive labour market and promoting employment as a right and possibility for all;

— Ensuring appropriate education;

— Ensuring suitable living conditions for all;

— Reducing regional differences;

— Improving the provision of services; and

— Ensuring income and means for a decent standard of living.[15]

One of the four major aims stated in the NAP is to facilitate participation in employment, primarily through the programmes of the Active Employment Policy (AEP). Under the second main objective—to facilitate access to resources, rights, goods and services—the NAP lists access to education and access to culture. The third main objective is to prevent the risk of exclusion by promoting e-inclusion, preventing exclusion from work, preventing discrimination and preventing other forms of exclusion (ensuring, among other things, access to school) and the last main objective of the NAP is to ensure support for the most vulnerable members of society—among which the Roma population is listed—in gaining employment, in education, with housing needs and with social inclusion.

[15] Government of Slovenia, "National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (NAP/inclusion 2004–2006)", 2004, at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/nap_incl_2004_si_en_version.pdf.

(b) Assessing Language Education Policies for the Inclusion of Roma Children in Slovenia

Although the inclusion of Roma children and children of other ethnic minority groups in the Slovenian educational system is based on the principle of equal opportunities and includes special rights with regards to their mother tongue and culture, the situation of Roma pupils in primary school is worse than that of pupils from the majority population. The dropout rate among Roma children is still much higher than that of their Slovene counterparts and Roma pupils are over-represented in primary schools with adapted programmes. There is no data available at the national level on the exact dropout rate but partial research studies and the latest population censuses show that the share of Roma with incomplete primary school education is much higher that that of ethnic Slovenes. One of the reasons for this is the lack of knowledge among Roma children of the Slovene language; in standard tests of children upon entry into primary school, Roma children's results are usually worse, mostly because they fail to understand the tests or the manner of testing was in discrepancy with their culture. Adequate didactics and methodology for the teaching of the Roma language have still not been developed (exercise notebooks, Roma language textbooks, etc.). Moreover, the number of teachers with an adequate command of the Roma language is still low.[16]

Therefore, the Slovenian NAP 2004–2006 strongly emphasizes the education of the Roma. The goals mentioned for education policies are to improve the educational performance of Roma pupils, respecting their culture and, at the same time, involving the majority in this process. Among the policies envisaged by the NAP, two aim at language education policies: the development of methods for teaching Slovenian to Roma pupils; and the introduction of the Roma language as an optional subject. Furthermore, the inclusion of Roma culture, history and identity in the implementation of the school curriculum is included.

(i) Methods for Teaching the Slovene Language to Roma Pupils

This strategy is currently being developed and no concrete measures have yet been taken. However, the possibility of teaching Slovene as the second language in primary school

[16] Žagar, Komac, Medvešek and Bešter, "Final Report Slovenia …", 66.

systems is expected to bring about better school results of Roma pupils as a direct outcome. In the long term, a better command of the Slovene language is supposed to make inclusion into society easier for Roma children, by enabling them to attain higher education and enter the labour market. Activities aimed at adjusting didactics and methodology accordingly are foreseen for the period 2005–2010.

(ii) Introduction of the Romani Language as an Optional Subject

The National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy on the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia, adopted in August 2005, and the NAP 2004–2006 propose the introduction of the subject of Romani culture and language in primary schools, with three main expected outcomes. Firstly, the preservation of the Romani language is an essential element of Romani culture. An improved command of their mother tongue will also lead to a better command of the Slovene language and will contribute to an overall better school performance. However, to implement this project, the necessary conditions need to be in place, such as the standardization of the Romani language and the preparation of teaching materials, conditions which have not yet been created. Preparations in that direction are ongoing but the introduction of the Romani language into the curricula from the first grade onwards is still some way away. According to the research team from Slovenia, the appeals of experts that mother tongue learning is not only the right of members of ethnic minorities to preserve their ethnic and cultural identity but also a necessary condition for good school performance have not yet been translated into policies.[17]

(iii) Introduction of Roma Teaching Assistants

One of the expected outcomes of introducing Roma teaching assistants in primary school in Slovenia is to build up a positive Roma identity and higher self-esteem among Roma children, through better school performance and decreases in the rate of school dropout among Roma pupils. The Roma assistants work at class, school and community level and their roles vary, as professional standards have not yet been established for this post. The NAP 2004–2006 plans the adoption of professional standards for the Roma assistant position no sooner than 2008, while the assistant has been introduced regionally as a pilot

[17] *Ibid.*, 92.

project. Therefore, it is difficult at this point to make statements on the effectiveness of this measure. However, as it is the only measure in terms of education policy that is already in place, the Slovenian research team ventured to ascertain the impact of the Roma assistant policy.

The objectives of the policy are manifold: the Roma assistant's role is to contribute to the Roma children's improved school performance, raise their self-perception, establish improved communication between them and teachers, and their parents and teachers, and to decrease the school dropout rate among Roma pupils. The effects of introducing Roma assistants can be evaluated by looking at different aspects: improvement in school performance, increased interest of Roma pupils in attending school, increased interest of Roma parents in the school work of their children, improvements in the relations among pupils in class and better inclusion of Roma pupils in after school activities. In 2005, the first generation of Roma assistants was educated in a one year pilot program,[18] which consisted of theoretical (lectures) and practical (work experience at schools or kindergartens) components. In 2006, the Regional Development Agency Mura Ltd carried out a survey to evaluate the work of Roma assistants participating in the project. Their work was evaluated in two ways: through the subjective estimations of the Roma assistants themselves and of the teachers and head teachers who worked with them; and by objective indicators, such as school reports (documentation) on the performance of Roma pupils. The survey discovered that, in general, the Roma assistants positively evaluate their own work and the Roma pupils' progress. The teachers and head teachers who were asked about the effect of Roma assistants on the school performance of Roma children attributed the better learning results of Roma children to the Roma assistants. Most teachers expressed the conviction that the Roma assistants' work contributed to better communication between Roma pupils and other pupils, between teachers and Roma pupils, and between teachers and Roma parents. The majority also believed that Roma assistants had a great impact upon better inclusion and motivation of Roma pupils at school.

[18] The project 'Roma Education and Information Centre' is coordinated by Regional Development Agency Mura Ltd and so is financed by the Community Initiative Equal. The anticipated results of the project are: the establishment of a national professional standard for Roma assistants; education and training of the first generation of Roma assistants; introduction of the Roma assistants' work in schools and evaluation of their work; the establishment of the Roma Education and Information Centre and the legal basis for its operation.

The evaluation of school documents provides more objective indicators, such as improved school performance, greater motivation on the part of Roma children or more active participation in school work. However, it proves difficult to attribute with certainty the positive changes exclusively to the Roma assistants' work. Changes might have been brought about by the gradual reformation of primary school and the transition from an eight year primary school system to a nine year primary school system since 1999/2000. As the objective observations of increased performance of Roma children are actually in accordance with the subjective perceptions regarding the success of the Roma assistants' work, however, it may be anticipated that Roma assistants to a large extent contributed to the positive changes.[19]

2. The Czech Republic

(a) Promotion of Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Minorities in the Czech National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2004–2006)

The Czech NAP does not explicitly establish a connection between cultural policies and social exclusion but its overall orientation emphasizes the economic aspect of social exclusion and therefore promotes policies for employment. The NAP also emphasizes the issues of education, including extracurricular education. Here, the document does not, as one would expect, establish a link to cultural aspects of social inclusion. However, stressing the importance of education at least partially balances the overall concentration of the NAP on economic aspects. The Czech NAP pays attention to the issue of access of disadvantaged groups to education, thus directly concerning ethnic minorities, a point that is repeated in the section dealing with the situation of the Roma. Access to education is, however, dealt with only in close relation to the Roma community; in relation to immigrants, only the creation of foreign language textbooks is mentioned. Extracurricular education and further education is mentioned only in relation to the general population.[20]

(b) Assessing Language Education Policies in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the educational situation of the Roma is similar to that in Slovenia. It is reported that "around 60% do not complete elementary education, 29%

[19] Žagar, Komac, Medvešek and Bešter, "Final Report Slovenia …", 103.
[20] Horáková and Bareš, "Final Report Czech Republic …", 58–60.

complete only elementary education and 9.3% complete secondary or upper secondary education".[21] The general situation has improved in the last decade but the status of the Roma has not improved in comparison to other ethnic groups. Educational policies aimed at improving the situation of the Roma are similar in regard to design and expected outcomes to the Slovenian ones. The overarching goal of educational policies for the Roma is 'equalizing action', i.e., to help Roma children "to bring about a significant change in the present situation in which a high number of Roma children attain only the lowest possible level of education".[22] Among the main policies, the preparatory classes programme is worth mentioning here, as it is addressed to all children from socio-culturally and linguistically disadvantaged environments and therefore it is not a policy exclusively designed for Roma children. This programme started in 1997/1998 with the goal of preparing the entrance of disadvantaged children into primary school and to limit their risk of failure during the first cycles of primary school, translating into an increase in the school performance of pupils over the years. It is not yet possible to gather reliable data on the specific effects of this policy and, in particular, it was not possible to gather disaggregated data for Roma pupils in particular preparatory classes or data on education assistants and support for Roma higher and university education. Roma assistants were also introduced in the Czech NAP; they work mostly in preparatory classes and in the first grades of primary schools, while projects aim at extending their role to higher classes in primary schools. Some of the most relevant indicators in this case are the level of education attained, the school performance of the Roma (in terms, for example, of marks, etc.) and the discrimination level of the majority. Also in this case, no figures are available to assess the impact of the education assistant policy on Roma children's performance. As each school is individually responsible for hiring assistants and for monitoring and evaluation, no data are collected in a systematic way from the centre. As no data are available to assess the effects of the Roma assistant policy on the achievements of Roma pupils, no comprehensive comparison between Slovenia and the Czech Republic can be conducted. Nevertheless, some figures related to the subjective assessments of head teachers in the schools where Roma assistants work suggest that attitudes are more favourable in Slovenia and that the perceived utility of Roma assistant activities is lower in the Czech Republic. Although observers expressed a generally

[21] *Ibid.*, 88.
[22] *Ibid.*, 87.

favourable attitude towards these policies and their impact, one of the major shortcomings noticed has been the lack of coordination between ministry policies, which has had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the overall management of funds allocated to policies in favour of the Roma. Hence, "to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the Roma Integration Policy Concept, it is necessary to re-assess the current financial support system and to propose a framework that will permit the implementation of the long-term measures proposed in the Concept at the local level and in cooperation with all the relevant partners".[23]

3. Slovakia

(a) Promotion of Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Minorities in the Slovakian National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2004–2006)

The Slovakian National Action Plan on Social Inclusion focuses in a rather one dimensional manner on economic inclusion. The Slovak research team therefore concluded that the "National Action Plan of the Slovak Republic Regarding the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015", approved by the government of Slovakia, represents a more usable, though rather limited reference. This document, introduced by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute, approaches issues of social inclusion in a more complex way. It was approved and adopted by the Slovakian cabinet as part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, launched on 2 February 2005 in Sofia, Bulgaria. One of the NAP's top priorities is education:

> The integration of the Roma to a great extent requires that the negative attitudes of the majority population be changed, perhaps by systematically altering the content of education. In the field of education, human development with special emphasis on marginalized Romany communities is implemented on three basic levels: 1. training teachers and assistant teachers; 2. creating textbooks and manuals for teachers and parents; 3. transforming the curriculum.[24]

[23] *Ibid*., 94.
[24] Government of the Slovak Republic, *Národný akčný plán Slovenskej republiky k Dekáde začleňovania rómskej populácie 2005–2015 [National Action Plan of the Slovak Republic Regarding the Decade of*

The document establishes basic goals and identifies indicators for monitoring the impact of measures to improve the access of Roma children to education and the quality of their education. However, the document is extremely vague in formulating these goals and fails to explain exactly how they will be achieved. Furthermore, meeting these goals will require substantial funding from the state budget but the document foresees the necessary funding only for 2005, not beyond. Nevertheless, the Decade of Roma Inclusion provides a political framework for the governments of the participating countries to declare their willingness to help their Romani citizens integrate and overcome their social exclusion. Given that the programme will span a decade, whether its goals are achieved or not depends largely on future administrations in the different countries and their level of commitment.[25]

(b) Assessing Language Education Policies in Slovakia

In Slovakia, where the Roma represent 1.7% of the population (unofficial estimates that take into account the so-called self-declaration problem regard a figure of around 9% as more realistic), the educational situation of Roma pupils is similarly bleak to that in the other two Central European countries presented above. Among the key factors mentioned as reasons, language and cultural barriers regularly emerge. Insufficient knowledge of the Slovak language and the lack of availability of education in the Romani language are cited as a significant cause of the poor performance of Roma children, especially those from isolated settlements. According to the findings of the State School Inspection, in 99% of schools with pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (mainly Roma) surveyed, the Romani language was not used in the teaching process in the school year 2002/2003. The remaining 1% was composed of a few cases of use of Romani by Roma teaching assistants. While there is no specific information on the share of Roma children who do not speak Slovak, general data show that some 60% of Roma have Romani as their mother tongue. Language barrier issues are frequently cited as the cause for the need for Roma assistants, one of whose key roles is seen as translating to children. A number of available reports argue that cultural barriers also represent a major cause of poor performance of Roma children in the education system. Children from segregated

Roma Inclusion 2005–2015] (Úrad vlády SR, Bratislava, 2005), cited in Vasecka, Sadovská and Vašečková, "Final Report Slovakia …", 53.

[25] Vasecka, Sadovská and Vašečková, "Final Report Slovakia …", 53–55.

settlements often enter the system unadjusted to the cultural habits of the majority. They are often used to a less hierarchic environment and lack a feeling for authority. Traditional education among the Roma has been home education geared towards community survival, with less emphasis on individual performance.[26] Such language and culturally based barriers can be bridged by pedagogical assistants for Roma children. Roma pupils are often automatically assigned to special schools, where even basic education is very limited. The debate among policy makers covered different approaches to resolve this issue, in particular whether or not special schools should be abolished, what (if any) should be the role of Romani in schools and the possible role of multicultural education or intercultural activities. The policies designed and partly implemented in the framework of the Slovakian NAP on Social Inclusion address the primary school level, where the general goal is to increase the educational performance of Roma pupils by improving the training and preparation of pupils and by reducing the percentage of Roma children attending special schools/institutions, mainly by improving the material conditions in which Roma pupils live and study. According to the government, school attendance has increased dramatically and Roma children are performing much better but, at present, no hard data has yet been published to support this claim. Also in Slovakia, Roma assistants are active, with early projects in this direction having been carried out by nongovernmental organizations for more than ten years. The government has only started to implement this policy more systematically since 2005. Again, no data is available as to the effects of this policy or to costs. The second field of intervention in favour of the Roma concerns higher education. The main goals that the government wants to pursue are to increase the percentage of Roma attending high schools and to increase the percentage of Roma attending university education. Finally, efforts should be made to establish a study department of Romani language and literature in universities. The third area of intervention envisaged in the NAP is supporting the lifetime education of Roma with unfinished educations from the perspective of applying for a job on the labour market. The goal would be to reduce by 50% the ratio of Roma with unfinished educations.

[26] *Ibid.*, 93.

4. Sweden

(a) Promotion of Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Minorities in the Swedish National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2004–2006)

Sweden has developed ambitious NAPs, aimed primarily at alleviating poverty through increasing work and lifelong learning. Focuses on culture and the social inclusion of ethnic minorities are touched on in policies on school improvement as well as on integration into the labour market. The Swedish NAPs follow the basic objective of substantially reducing by 2010 the number of people at risk of exclusion because of social and/or economic vulnerability, irrespective of ethnic background. In a 2005 report concerning the progress in meeting the objectives set out in the NAPs, the Swedish government stated that integration goals had to be mainstreamed into all activities. Among these goals were equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all irrespective of ethnic and cultural background.[27]

The measures to achieve these goals primarily focus on promoting employment. In 2004, Sweden adopted an action plan for employment that specified an inclusive labour market with emphasis being placed on those groups whose participation is below normal (immigrants, young people and the elderly). In regard to education, an NAP policy for pre-schools is expected to ensure that all children whose native language is not Swedish are given support to improve their ability to communicate both in Swedish and in their native language. A four year pilot project involving subject teaching in the pupils' mother tongues in grades 7–9 of compulsory school in segregated areas intends to improve the education situation.[28]

(b) Assessing Language Education Policies in Sweden Aimed at the Social Inclusion of Immigrants

In Sweden, as a matter of principle, no statistics are established with reference to ethnicity. Thus, integration goals are measured by monitoring statistics related to 'persons born outside Sweden' or persons 'who were born in another country'. However, even

[27] National Action Plan (NAP), 2005. "Sweden's Report on Measures to Prevent Poverty and Social Exclusion" (Regeringskansliet, Stockholm, 2005), at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2005/se_en.pdf.
[28] See Hetzler, Persson and Lundin, "Final Report Sweden …", 11–16.

these statistics are not available for all of the indicators set out in the NAPs. Sweden is one of the European countries with the largest proportion of inhabitants born in another country; according to the 2002 census, 11.8% of the Swedish population are born in another country and an additional 9.6% of the population born in Sweden has at least one parent who was foreign born.[29]

Also in Sweden, there are major differences in the educational performance of these two groups. People with a foreign background generally perform worse than people with a Swedish background and significant differences among the two groups exist also in the domain of adult education.

Pursuing better social integration through language training in education has been one of the main policy interventions adopted in Sweden. Improving the communication capabilities of minorities is seen as a cornerstone policy to foster social integration. Two policies in particular are worth noting: the policy to strengthen the competence in the native languages of children in compulsory school together with the teaching of Swedish as a second language; and the policy that aims to increase the Swedish language skills of adult immigrants. All immigrants are labelled as 'non-Swedish born', without further distinguishing their ethnicities, which does not allow for distinction between different needs and backgrounds.

In the case of the first policy—language training both in the native language of 'non-Swedish born' pupils and in Swedish—the impact of language training on the equality in school performance of Swedish born and non-Swedish born was the focus of the study. The policy is based on the idea that both languages have to be strengthened, in a similar manner to the policy of strengthening the Romani language in Slovenia. Here, the utility of teaching Swedish receives no particular explanation. On the other hand, two main reasons are given to justify teaching in the native language: better development of the cognitive capacities of pupils and ideological reasons related to freedom of choice, i.e., the right to maintain links with one's original cultural heritage. A question immediately arises. Which language should be strengthened, the native language or the language spoken in the country of immigration? After careful deliberation, Sweden has answered

[29] *Ibid.*, 22.

this question with 'both', arguing that children need to establish a cultural identity in a native language in order to establish a good basis for the language of the country of immigration. The language theory is based on research designed to show the development of cognitive capacity. Without a firm language as a base language, the cognitive development of a child who immigrated to another country with another language develops cognitive learning problems. Swedish society has accepted this principle of child development and thereby strengthens the native language used actively at home in order to create the best possible conditions for the child's assimilation into a Swedish-speaking society. The study wanted to assess if this language training policy has been effective in reducing the percentage of students born outside Sweden with incomplete final grades from compulsory school.

Another policy to be assessed in terms of its effect is the provision of classes in native languages at pre-school level. According to the Swedish NAP, "pre-schools should strive to meet every child with another native language other than Swedish with support to develop his capacity to communicate just as well in Swedish as in his native language".[30] Traditionally in the Swedish system, children attending pre-schools with a native language other than Swedish (12% in 2001) participated in some form of supporting activity in their native language. In 1990, for example, 60% of children in pre-schools received such support. However, due to the strong decentralization of the Swedish educational system beginning in the early 1990s, in 2005 this percentage felt to 14%, although, according to observations, the number of children in need of special support has increased. The main reason for this is that "although home language activities in pre-schools are a national goal, when costs were transferred to local authorities programmes were substantially cut. This indicates that local authorities do not see this activity as a priority."[31] The same trend is visible in compulsory school, where the decentralization of the responsibility for education from the centre to local authorities likewise brought about a decrease in the supply of classes in native languages. The main reason to explain this trend is that the provision of classes in many languages often is not feasible for small school districts. Finally, the second language training policy adopted in Sweden for adult education (Swedish for immigrants, Sfi) was examined by the researchers. This

[30] *Ibid*., 26.
[31] *Ibid.*

programme solely focuses on teaching the Swedish language as the key to access to the domestic labour market. Although for this programme the per learner cost has increased from 1996 to 2001, the percentage of immigrants who stopped attending the programme before completion does not seem to be negatively related to the resources allocated to Sfi, which does not necessarily indicate a problem but could be related to the fact that immigrants leave the programme because they have found a job or more effective ways of learning the language.

The culture and language indicators show that the programmes introduced to foster a multicultural Swedish society have proven inadequate in helping children with non-Swedish backgrounds to gain equality with their schoolmates with Swedish backgrounds. Programmes of classes in the native languages have not been sufficient to change this discrepancy. The research study concluded that the programme of social inclusion of adults through strengthening their competency in the Swedish language has not produced the positive results once assumed either. The large number of immigrants that drop out of Swedish language courses is indicative that acculturation to a new country by assimilating the language is problematic. Although Sweden has placed emphasis on the importance of multiculturalism and the importance of equality among all of Sweden's residents, the production-line approach to the Swedish system sends a clear assimilation message. It is often argued that a reason for failed integration in Sweden is those with a non-Swedish background do not know the Swedish language well enough to function in the contemporary job market. This is a lively debate that is often disputed. However, the fact remains that immigrants have a much higher rate of unemployment than native born Swedish individuals.[32]

B. Language Education Policies in Estonia and Latvia Promoting the Social Inclusion of Russian-speaking Minorities

Estonia and Latvia have been facing similar challenges after independence, such as the reorganization of the education systems, the legitimate reassertion and promotion of national identity and culture, and the management of large Russian speaking-minorities. Their approach toward social inclusion is very similar: they place strong emphasis on

[32] *Ibid.*

employment and proficiency in national languages is regarded as the necessary condition for having better access to the job market. However, educational reforms have been adopted in both countries in recent years to increase the knowledge and the position of national languages in society, as well as among minority groups. Although the results of these reforms are not available yet, the trend to date seems inclined in a positive direction in both countries.

1. Promotion of Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Minorities in the Estonian National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2004–2006)

In Estonian documents on social inclusion policies, social exclusion is defined primarily with respect to the employment situation of a person. Hence, a good starting point to understand Estonian inclusion policies is to observe the economic and demographic trends in the country. From 2000–2005, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Estonia has steadily increased at a rate between 7.1% and 10.5%. During the same period, the unemployment rate has decreased from 12.8% to 7.9%.[33] However, although the overall economic outlook of the country is promising, employment remains the main focus of the Estonian NAP on Social Inclusion. This is due to persistent differences in unemployment rates and average per capita income among ethnicities. Among the unemployed, non-ethnic Estonians are much more strongly represented than ethnic Estonians. In 2004, 31% of the population in Estonia belonged to an ethnic group different from the Estonian one and 41% of the unemployed belonged to a different ethnic group than Estonian. Differences among ethnic groups exist also with respect to the level of the average income. It has been brought to light that "the average income of Russians and other non-Estonians is slightly lower compared to ethnic Estonians".[34] On the other hand, low demographic growth and migrations in the labour force towards Western Europe represent serious challenges to the economic growth of the country. The inclusion of unemployed people into the labour market would compensate this shortage in the labour force. These resources are concentrated in some particular regions in the northeast and southeast of the country, populated mainly by Russian-speaking non-ethnic Estonians. Poor knowledge of the Estonian language is often cited as the main reason for these

[33] Data from Eurostat.
[34] Kirch, Tuisk and Talts, "Final Report Estonia …", 12.

regional differences. A survey of the situation of unemployed youth in the Tallinn and Jõhvi regions concluded that:

> [T]here is no significant difference in the level of educational potential among majority and minority nationalities but at the same time the indicators of linguistic competence differ, which determine possibilities in labour careers at large, and regional differences are clearly noticeable.[35]

Inclusion policies in Estonia thus focus on the development of linguistic skills in Estonian for persons belonging to national minorities.

2. Promotion of Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Minorities in the Latvian National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2004–2006)

A similar picture can be observed in Latvia. The situation of minority groups and, in particular, of the Russian-speaking minority, is similar to that of Estonia, although ethnic diversity is higher in Latvia. Latvia has experienced a strong economic development from 2000–2005, with an average annual rate of growth of GDP of around 7.9% in real terms and an unemployment rate that has decreased from 16.4% in 2000 to 8.9% in 2005.[36] Employment and participation in the labour market play a crucial role in the definition of social inclusion. Although "there are no substantial differences in poverty and social exclusion indicators between Latvians and non-Latvians, except for a very small minority of Roma",[37] some differences in employment rates still exist among different ethnic groups. In 2002, there were "50.8% of unemployed persons of Latvian ethnicity in the total number of unemployed, 35.4% of Russian origin and 13.8% represented other ethnicities",[38] demonstrating a slight over-representation in unemployment of ethnic groups other than Latvian. Poor knowledge of the Latvian language is seen as the major factor in explaining different patterns in employment rates among ethnic groups.

Ethnic integration related policies in Latvia are mainly defined in the National Programme "Society Integration in Latvia" (2001–2006). The programme covers cultural policies, language policy, education policy, civic integration policy and, partially, social

[35] *Ibid.*, 26.
[36] Data from Eurostat.
[37] Žepa, Lāce, Kļave and Šūpule, "Final Report Latvia …", 19.
[38] *Ibid.*, 18.

integration policy. The goals for the language policy are also set out in the Language Laws of 1989, 1992 and 1999.[39]

3. Assessment of Language Education Policies in Estonia and Latvia

Both in Estonia and in Latvia, educational policies—and language policies in particular—are regarded as the key for the promotion of social inclusion. The "Integration in Estonian Society 2000–2007" programme is the framework educational policy for minorities in Estonia. The programme is articulated in four sub-programmes ('education', 'the education and culture of ethnic minorities', 'the teaching of Estonian to adults' and 'social competence'). However, no specific data has been collected as to the implementation of these sub-programmes, except for expenditures for language courses between 2000 and 2005. These show a fluctuating trend.[40] Particularly interesting is the bilingual education programme (Estonian–Russian) started in four schools in 2000 on the basis of the Canadian experience (134 pupils in total). Today, more than 2,500 pupils attend this programme but initial data on the results achieved will be available only at the end of 2007. The advantage of bilingual programmes is that, together with the development of skills in Estonian, it allows for the maintenance of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Russian-speaking children. Census data shows that the knowledge of Estonian among Russian-speakers is increasing but it is not possible to evaluate to what extent educational policy outcomes explain this improvement, as nothing is said about the role played by other factors, such as the media.

In Latvia, a specific programme called "Society Integration in Latvia" (2001–2006) addresses the social exclusion of ethnic minorities. Language policy, in particular, plays a major role in this programme, with emphasis on the reinforcement of Latvian as an official language in all the most important domains of society. The reform of the Latvian educational system started in the 1999/2000 school year with a preparatory phase until 2003. Four different models of bilingual education have been designed and implemented

[39] Detailed analysis of the language policies in the Baltic countries can be found in: Priit Järve, "Language Battles in Baltic States: From 1989 to 2002", in Farimah Daftary and Francois Grin (eds.), *Nation Building, Ethnicity and Language Politics in Transition Countries* (LGI, Budapest, 2003), 73–106.
[40] Kirch, Tuisk and Talts, "Final Report Estonia …", 43.

by the Ministry of Education, all of which revolve around the strengthening of the Latvian language.[41]

Assignments for additional payments for teachers of Latvian and of subjects in Latvian in minority education establishments have steadily increased from 1999 to 2006 (+167%). In 2006, the total amount of additional resources allocated to payments of teacher was EUR 1,446,456. Moreover, more than EUR 12 million has been spent from 1996 to 2006 for the National Latvian Language Training Programme (since 2004, the National Latvian Language Training Agency), whose main goal has been to "elaborate manuals for minority education programmes, provide professional training courses for teachers in teaching in Latvian and bilingually, as well as Latvian language courses for the teachers and other professional groups".[42] The outcomes of bilingual programmes can at this point hardly be assessed, as preliminary results will be published during 2007. A complete assessment will not be possible before 2009, when the first generation of students will have graduated at the secondary level of education.

IV. Perceptions and Acceptance of Language Education Policies in the Member States

In Slovenia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, similar policies have been designed and implemented to promote the social inclusion of the Roma population through education policies. All three countries adopted a Roma assistant policy and preliminary preparation for compulsory school. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, some forms of support for the Roma at a higher education level are envisaged. Qualitative reports, focus group conclusions and data gathered in surveys confirm that policies such as Roma assistants or preparatory classes have had some general positive impacts, even if it is difficult to associate cost figures to them. However, one can discern the general direction of changes and improvements. While in the case of Roma assistants in Slovenia and in the Czech Republic an overall improvement has been reported, in the Swedish case preliminary results suggest that policies adopted to reduce the difference in educational performances between Swedish-born and foreign-born students have not been effective.[43] Also, the

[41] Žepa, Lāce, Kļave and Šūpule, "Final Report Latvia …", 32–34.
[42] *Ibid*., 43.
[43] Malloy and Gazzola, "Final Report on 'The Aspect of Culture …", 69.

language education policies in Estonia and Latvia display very similar streaks and there seems to be some improvement in the language acquisition of the Russian-speaking minorities of the respective official language. However, a positive trend as to the decrease in representation of the Russian-speaking population in unemployment cannot yet be denoted.

Comparing the policies and their effectiveness, it becomes obvious that a policy firstly needs to influence those contextual elements that are acknowledged to be important in the creation of a more favourable framework for integration in order to be successful and have sustainable positive outcomes.[44] That means that, for the creation of a positive environment for the implementation of policies, the ground has to be prepared. First of all, the attitude of the minority needs to be positively influenced in regard to policy interventions. It has been reported that the Roma themselves are sometimes the fiercest opponents of social inclusion programmes. This requires that particular attention has to be paid to the interplay between the self-representations of the minority and the character of the policy proposed. One of the strong points of the Roma assistant policy has been the active involvement of families in the programme, which thus creates positive attitudes in the environment surrounding the implementation of school reform and avoiding possible tensions between the school and family spheres. Another condition is that policies explicitly take into account the attitudes of the majority. The presence of prejudices and stigmatization has been reported in almost all countries under evaluation; hence, it needs to be explicitly included in policy design. In Slovakia:

> A large part of the majority population perceives the presence of the Roma in Slovakia as a burden and this feeling is even more intense when they think of Roma being in their proximity […] A large part of the majority population forms its attitude to the Roma under the influence of prejudices and stereotypes originating in ethnocentrism. The high degree of refusal and widespread prejudices directly influences the behaviour of the Roma, who often just fulfill the idea of the majority population about them.[45]

[44] *Ibid.*, 69.
[45] Vasecka, Sadovská and Vašečková, "Final Report Slovakia …", 107.

Finally, long lasting intervention is a precondition to allow for well structured and integrated programmes and therefore to avoid short-term and small-scale activities, the presence of which is quite often a symptom of lack of long-term political commitment.[46]

Reforms of educational systems in the two member states of Estonia and Latvia have only started recently, between five and ten years ago. Considering that educational systems are structurally slow to respond to changes, it would be premature to expect clear results for evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of bilingual education programmes. However, general attitudes toward language policies can be observed. Reforms can be carried out with general consensus or be dictated by the state, which directly affects the attitudes and behaviours of those concerned. Attitudes, as mentioned before, play a crucial role in creating a favourable framework for inclusion policies to be successful. According to an interview with Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking students carried out in Estonia in 2006, many Russian-speaking students claim that "ethnic differentiation takes place in Estonia and the main factor of this process is the special status of the Estonian language as the national language".[47] Language policy seems to be perceived by the interviewees as a possible source of exclusion rather than as promoting inclusion in mainstream society. According to the results of the same interview research, "most of the Russian-speaking students who participated in the interviews believe career possibilities are decent and their opinions about gaining higher education in Estonia are pessimistic".[48] This pessimistic view on the part of the Russian-speaking population could possibly have been avoided by positively influencing the attitudes of the minority toward language policies before their introduction.

In Latvia, it has been reported that "students and teachers have a positive attitude toward bilingual education, believing that it represents a compromise in terms of minority education reforms",[49] that "dominant attitudes about the shift toward a system in which most classes are taught in Latvian, however, were negative. During the latter phase of education reform implementation, negative attitudes among target groups, particularly

[46] See, for example, Horáková and Bareš, "Final Report Czech Republic …", 94.
[47] Kirch, Tuisk and Talts, "Final Report Estonia …", 24.
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] Žepa, Lāce, Kļave and Šūpule, "Final Report Latvia …", 39.

students, have been exacerbated."[50] According to some experts, the reform has been set up in a hurry, without clear criteria and mechanisms for evaluation.[51] In conclusion, more attention should be paid in both countries to the political atmosphere in which reforms are carried out and more efforts should be made to promote positive attitudes towards language education reform.

V. Conclusion: Can the OMC Promote Cultural Diversity in the European Union?

Even though, at this stage, no clear conclusions can be drawn on the effectiveness of language education policies on creating equal opportunities for all, the NAPs evaluated have emphasized the importance of such policies in the process of promoting the social inclusion of ethnic minorities. Some NAPs attribute the same importance to those policies that involve both majority and minority groups in mutual cultural understanding processes. However, the study also revealed a major problem related to the policies assessed: not all clearly aim at the promotion of cultural diversity—some appear to follow the goal of assimilation, which is particularly visible in language policies. Cultural hegemony is a phenomenon whose appearance cannot be avoided in multiethnic and multicultural societies and it needs to be seriously addressed by the European Union and its agenda of 'Unity in Diversity'. In its Joint Report on Social Inclusion from March 2006,[52] the European Commission highlighted culture as a precious factor of difference and promoted the celebration of different cultures within a single society, emphasizing access to and participation in cultural activities as a core part of human existence. Hence, increasing access for minorities to the cultural activities of the majority community can foster intercultural understanding in multiethnic societies, under the conditions that the aim is not assimilation. One of the major results of the assessment of language education policies and positive effect on the social inclusion of ethnic minorities in the study presented here is therefore that ethnic minorities should be seen as internal resources enriching society. Understanding this requires dialogue in which the majority is encouraged to more strongly involve the ethnic minority population in the labour market and which also convinces the minority members of their value to the society they live in.

[50] *Ibid.*
[51] See, in particular, *ibid*., 51 and 74.
[52] European Commission, "Joint Report on Social Inclusion …"

This value includes the different cultural and linguistic traditions these minorities contribute to mainstream society.

If the status of social integration of ethnic minorities in the member states under evaluation and their eventual social inclusion are indicated by improved intercultural relations between minorities and majorities, it becomes obvious that the six NAPs evaluated are only an initial step toward the realization of the goals set out in the Lisbon Strategy. It has been argued that the OMC is too small and insignificant to address such an immense task as improving the social inclusion of excluded groups in the EU[53] and that it is merely a dialogue process because the OMC policy has no supported legal foundation in Community law and depends on the goodwill of member states.

A major problem encountered in the evaluation of policies aimed at better inclusion and access to opportunities of ethnic minorities is that it suffers from a lack of clearly defined statistics concerning ethnic minorities in all of the countries of this first group, generally as a matter of principle in these countries. However, in order to develop effective measures to address the social exclusion of ethnic minorities and create conditions conducive to their access to opportunities, data needs to be available on their current situation. The OMC again appears to be too soft a tool to promote the collection of reliable data in EU member states, relying solely on their voluntary cooperation.

[53] See, for example, Mary Daly, "EU Social Policy after Lisbon", 44(3) *Journal of Common Market Studies* (2006), 461–481, at 478.

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